

Cabinet

Supplementary Information



Date: Tuesday, 5 December 2023

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: The Council Chamber - City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR

2. Public Forum

(Pages 4 - 25)

Issued by: Amy Rodwell, Democratic Services
City Hall, Bristol, BS1 9NE
E-mail: democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk
Date: Tuesday, 19 December 2023



Question: CQ08.01

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Re: Agenda item 8 – Cultural Investment Programme 2023 to 27

Question submitted by: Councillor Philippa Hulme

Background: I welcome the allocation of cultural grants and the Labour administration's wider investment in culture despite continued government cuts to the council's budget.

Labour's 2021 Manifesto commitments regarding culture include: Support Bristol's night-time economy and creative sector in its recovery; Raise awareness of Bristol's past through the History Commission; Support the return of Bristol Pride and St Paul's Carnival; Expand the Agent of Change principle to protect night-time entertainment economy; Invest in new and existing sports facilities

I am pleased there has been action on all of these items. The Cabinet will be aware that Government has cut council funding by over 60% since 2010. As such, the council has had less funding to offer cultural organisations. Despite the financial circumstances, it is commendable that we are keeping arts investment relatively high, while delivering on our manifesto commitments.

Question 1: Alongside the funding in this report and the aforementioned policies, please can the Mayor highlight other work Bristol City Council has been doing for the cultural sector?

Answer:

As well as continuing to invest in our cultural investment programme with £1.4 million across the three strands, which is no mean feat given the financial crisis in local government. Our record also includes::

- Delivering a £1.3 million Culture and Events programme as part of the wider High streets and renewal recovery programme investing in the city centre and citywide high streets.
- Being a thriving UNESCO city of film, with the expanded Bottle Yard Studios and the Bristol Film Office and the wider sector bringing in over £20m for each of the last two years
- Supporting cultural development across the city through the One City Culture Board and links across the One City Plan working directly with city partners

- Developing cultural and community strategies throughout major regeneration across the city
- Investing significantly in Bristol Beacon, which some Green Group representatives at the Cabinet meeting derided despite attending the opening event.
- Approving 62 Community Asset Transfers since May 2016, given to a range of different organisations across the city.
- Appointing a City Poet for the city since 2016 who have helped to capture the spirit and soul of our city.
- Introducing the agent of change planning principle in the new draft Local Plan to safeguard our music and cultural venues.
- Bringing in a Nighttime Economy Advisor to champion the businesses, workers and audiences who enjoy the city from 6pm – 6am and has been instrumental in the Thrive at Night project and Women’s Safety Charter.

Question: CQ08.02

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Re: Agenda item 8 – Cultural Investment Programme 2023 to 27

Question submitted by: Councillor Tessa Fitzjohn

Question 1: The grant funding in this report is commendable regarding increased diversity and equity. However, I was disappointed to see that Openness funding is not to be granted to some of our most significant cultural organisations across the city. Previously, the Mayor has indicated that he would consider applying for Bristol to become the next UK City of Culture.

With applications expected to open in 2025 for the 2029 title of UK City of Culture, does the Mayor feel that this budget offers enough investment to begin the development that this application is going to need?

This answer was provided during the meeting, the recording is available at:

[Cabinet - Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 4.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)

Question: CQ09.01

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Re: Agenda item 9 – Fire Safety Framework

Question submitted by: Councillor Brenda Massey

Question 1: As the Chair of the Avon Fire Authority, I welcome the investment into fire prevention.

I note the section: 'Fire safety work will include compartmentation and fire stopping work – ensuring appropriate materials and workmanship prevent a fire from spreading between properties in group of dwelling, installation of fire doors, and providing dedicated spaces for the storage and charging of mobility scooters and e bikes and scooters.'

As we all know, e-scooters are a major fire hazard, so I am glad that we are getting on the front foot to mitigate potential issues as their use becomes increasingly prevalent.

Please can the Cabinet Member for Housing Services please provide further details into the plans to dedicated space for charging e-bikes and e-scooters?

Answer:

- The increased use of lithium batteries and their storage is a concern for us all.
- The implementation and delivery of the mobility scooter storage programme is being considered across the Planned Improvements and Business Development services.
- We are determining an appropriate policy and delivery model to provide these resources across our varied portfolio, where these are deemed to be required.

Question: CQ10.01

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Re: Agenda item 10 – Fibre and CCTV Contract Amendment

Question submitted by: Councillor Brenda Massey

Question 1: I am pleased that our CCTV contract has seen 650 cameras upgraded. Likewise, I am pleased that the council is installing CCTV in fly-tipping hotspots. Are there any plans for further CCTV installation to deter crime and antisocial behaviour?

Answer

- For CCTV to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour, we work with our partner agencies and with our own services such as Community Safety, Housing, and Neighbourhood enforcement.
- These different services come forward for the projects and are then supported by our specialist team to use our technical expertise to manage it, so where the need is identified then wider BCC services or external agencies must fund it.
- Where a significant need has been identified and the budget/funding available to install and maintain CCTV, then CCTV is always considered as part of a range of prevention measures.

Question: PQ12.01 & PQ12.02

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Re: Agenda item 12 - City Centre Development and Delivery Plan

Question submitted by: Bristol Disability Equalities Forum (David Redgewell)

Question 1: What consultation to has Bristol city carried out with disabilities group and when in view of the Bristol disability equalities forum Objections With disability groups about the Proposed changes to the Horsefair and Penn Street for pedestrianisation and cycling facilities and the provision of a full equalities impact assessment by Bristol city council?

And the Transport Authority' for bus and coach services the mayor of west England combined transport Authority. Dan Norris Stagecoach west and First group plc Wales and West buses Division And can an equalities impact assessments be published. It should be note such a proposal in Oxford Westfield failed in the courts On equalities grounds and lack of passengers and bus company consultation.

Answer:

- The Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is published as part of the Cabinet papers (pages 596 – 621) [insert link]. It sets out the approach taken to engagement and consultation.
It notes the potential impact to Disabled people and how this has been mitigated on pages 615, 618 and 619.
- Engagement with the Bristol Disability Equality Forum, and other groups representing Disabled people took place in the following ways:
 - Two representatives for The Disability Equality Forum attended the inception workshop for the project in January 2022.
 - The Chair of Bristol Disability Equality Commission was invited to a workshop in May 2022 and a workshop in December 2022 focusing on Castle Park.
 - At the December workshop two other representatives attended from the Disability Equality Commission.
 - WECIL (organisation supporting Disabled people), attended both of these workshops.

- WECIL carried out an Accessibility Audit for the project to understand how we could improve accessibility in and around Castle Park
- These groups, as well as other Disability organisations, were invited to comment through the formal consultation held over summer 2023
- Formal responses were received from the Bristol Disability Equality Forum as part of the formal consultation, which were reviewed and taken account of in the update and refinement of the DDP
- Engagement with First Bus has taken place over several occasions this year, with BCC and First working closely to understand optimum bus route and stop locations in the city centre area. The proposals in the DDP reflect this. Engagement with WECA has been included as part of this process.

Question 2: In view the local plan policy and National government policy from the

Department of Transport being that bus service should be accessible to people with reduced mobility and partly sighted passengers. Being 400 meters. How can moving bus stops with castle kerbs and Drop Kerbs be improved by moving bus service and stop from the main shopping centre whilst leading access to the court yard and pick points for the private car . Making disability passengers go to Bond Street the Haymarket.

Will the mayor Malvin Rees council Don Alexander and mayor Dan Norris and his public transport Network officers Take a walk around the effect Roads and bus stops to the issue for passengers with reduced mobility and partly sighted by closing theses road to the public bus and coach and Taxis service for themselves with disabled passengers?

Gordon Richardson Bristol disability equalities forum Trustees David Redgewell Bristol disability equalities forum Trustees.

Answer:

- In response to the formal consultation and through engagement with First and groups representing Disabled people, a key change was to introduce a new key west-east bus corridor through Broadmead (Nelson Street – Fairfax Street – Broad Weir – Lower Castle Street). This means that although bus stops are moving from their current location (The Horsefair and Penn Street), many bus services will still stop in

the heart of the Broadmead area, or alternatively on Bond Street (100m from The Horsefair).

- While it is proposed that bus stops are removed from The Horsefair and Penn Street, they will be relocated on parallel streets, including Bond Street, Union Street and Fairfax Street or Broad Weir. Depending on where visitors are travelling to on arrival into Broadmead, the new bus stop locations could be closer to the final destination.
- The stop locations are within approximately 100m – 350m of the current bus stops.
- The exact location of stops is to be reviewed as part of a future project to develop a detailed bus route strategy.
- To further improve accessibility the following changes are proposed:
 - An increase of taxi rank spaces on streets in and around Broadmead
 - The same number of Blue Badge parking spaces in and around Broadmead
 - Improved public realm to deliver continuous surface treatments, clutter-free streets and clear, high-quality routes. This will include the main entrance routes into Broadmead from Bond Street, Haymarket and Temple Way.
 - More rest and seating points throughout the area
 - More public toilets
 - The creation of a high-quality, covered mobility hub, bringing together different travel mode options in one place.
 - Commitment to investigate shop mobility services and 'hail a ride' in connection with the mobility hub.
 - Quiet, green pockets of public realm/open space to have a break from busy streets
- The design team for the next stages of the project (to develop the detail design for the Broadmead streets) will be carrying out detailed modelling (including assessing the number of people who can access the centre by bus), testing and engagement.
- As set out in the EqIA, they will also prioritise engagement with Disabled people and carry out an accessibility audit to support the work.

Question: CQ12.01

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Re: Agenda item 12 - City Centre Development and Delivery Plan

Question submitted by: Councillor Philippa Hulme

Question 1: The plan gives the outline for 2,500 new high quality homes; 750 student bedrooms; new office spaces; a diversified and consolidated retail offer supported by extended leisure, community and cultural spaces, and more, in the city centre.

How much Community Infrastructure Levy can the council expect to receive as a result of these developments? I appreciate that it will be difficult to give an accurate estimate, but a projection based on similar regeneration schemes across the country will suffice.

Answer:

- It is impossible to provide a realistic projection at this point for the following reasons:
 - CIL rates are set locally so regeneration schemes in other towns and cities would be subject to different CIL levels and therefore are not comparable.
 - The floorspace contained in existing buildings that are to be converted or demolished can be offset for the purposes of CIL (so if there was a building of 800sq metres [sqm] on a site and it was being replaced with a building of 2,000sqm, then CIL would only be payable on the additional 1,200sqm)
 - Social housing is exempt from CIL, so the more social housing that is provided, the less the CIL payment will be.
 - The proposed size (in sqm) of the development is not known.
- Notwithstanding the above caveats, the Planning Team advises that a 750 bedroom student scheme on a cleared site would be expected to generate CIL of approximately £3m. The average (mean) CIL receipt per new residential property in the City Centre is approximately £7,000. Based on 2,500 dwellings this would generate a CIL of approximately £17.5m.
- If we assume that the above figures are reduced by 40% to take account of existing floorspace, this gives student development CIL of £1.8m and other residential CIL of

£10.5m. If we then assume 30% social housing, then the other residential CIL reduces further to £7.4m. This gives a total potential CIL receipt of approx. £9.2m.

- Therefore a very rough estimate would indicate around £9m of CIL could be received. However, due to the factors above, this figure should be treated with a great deal of caution and not relied upon.

Question: PQ16.04

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Re: Agenda item 16 - Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2024/25

Question submitted by: Andy Watt

Question 1: Given that a majority of members of the Finance Task Group do not support the proposals to change the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, will you follow their recommendation and keep the scheme intact?

This answer was provided during the meeting, the recording is available at:

[Cabinet - Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 4.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)

Question: PQ16.05

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Re: Agenda item 16 – Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2024/25

Question submitted by: Dan Ackroyd

Question 1: First, I want to make clear that I do think this administration is doing a good job controlling the budget for Bristol City Council. This city is clearly in a better position than Nottingham or Birmingham City Councils.

But the austerity measures and lack of funding from central government appear to have reached a critical level here in Bristol.

I am absolutely sure the Mayor would love to continue the Council Tax Reduction Scheme both because it's the right thing to do, but also it would avoid confrontation with people in Bristol.

But the budget appears to be so tight, that despite the mayor and most councillors wanting to keep the scheme going, and knowing that it is very unlikely to deliver the additional revenue, this Council is being forced to abandon the CTRS due to the requirement to set a 'balanced' budget.

And now this city is facing a lot of emergency spending due to the situation at Barton House.

I think it is time for this administration to make a clear statement to the people of Bristol that the Council is going to be forced to make cuts in the coming years.

Is this administration prepared to make a clear statement, either by themselves or jointly with politicians from other parties?

This answer was provided during the meeting, the recording is available at:

[Cabinet - Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 4.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)

Question: PQ17.03 & PQ17.04

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Re: Agenda item 17 – Council Tax Base

**Question submitted by: South West Transport Network & Railfuture
Sevenside (David Redgewell)**

Question 1: To ask mayor Malvin Rees and Deputy mayor Craig Cheney. What progress is made on the budget from the money raised on polluting vehicles in the city centre to reinvesting the money in improvement to the city bus and public transport and sustainable transport Networks, by passporting the money to the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris especially to improve the city Region bus network?

bus services to Ashton vale .Stapleton, Broomhill, Fishponds, oidbury court, Fishponds, Downend Bromley Heath. Southmead links to Filton uwe Bristol parkway station Bradley stoke Aztec west, st Anne's park and Bristlington parts of Easton and the Drings Areas that have lost their bus services. As the money is set in the base budget for the west of England mayoral combined Authority transport levy

This answer was provided during the meeting, the recording is available at:

[Cabinet - Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 4.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)

Question 2: Question to mayor Malvin Rees and Deputy mayor Craig Cheney. What discussion and consultation are taking place with South Gloucestershire county council Banes and North Somerset council and the Metro mayor Dan Norris especially the voters and Tax payer on setting city council budget?

On the Transport levy to be paid to the west of England mayoral combined transport joint with North Somerset council to pay for vital bus and public transport Network services in the city Region so people can get to work school College university, food shopping ,Heath care and hospital appointment and leasure and Tourism. The lack

of public transport especially effective the working class and older people within the city Region. The Transport levy is set in Bristol city council Budget.

David Redgewell South west transport Network.
Railfuture Severnside.

Answer:

This answer was provided during the meeting, the recording is available at:

[Cabinet - Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 4.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)

Question: PQ22.02 & PQ22.03

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Question submitted by: Nigel Varley

Question 1: In planning for the possible long-term rehousing of Barton House residents, and residents of the other LPS blocks of flats, should they need lengthy repairs/reconstruction or demolition, will the Council consider the following:

- a. using the current 200 Council home voids for emergency re-housing and, if so, setting aside the current 100 days (major) and 29 days (standard) of turnaround works so that tenants can move in immediately, where possible, with refurbishment work being done retrospectively
- b. taking appropriate measures to acquire the 2472 empty second homes and 1881 long-term empty homes in Bristol for emergency re-housing and mitigation of the effect of this emergency on the Council home waiting list?

This answer was provided during the meeting, the recording is available at:

[Cabinet - Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 4.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)

Question 2: Will the Council ensure that all measures, both short and long term, taken to accommodate evacuees from Barton House (and the other blocks if necessary) are negotiated and agreed with democratically elected and accountable tenants' representatives?

This answer was provided during the meeting, the recording is available at:

[Cabinet - Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 4.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)

Question: PQ22.04 & PQ22.05

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Question submitted by: Faye Davis

Question 1: Why didn't you hold a meeting for the residents of Barton House or write to us explaining the situation and why didn't you come up with a better plan?

Answer:

This was an emergency evacuation which took place on the same day that the decision was made, so unfortunately that urgency meant a meeting or other forewarning was not possible. We did however write to residents, hand-delivering letters on the day.

Since that time, we have provided regular written updates to explain the reasons for the evacuation, the support put in place, accommodation arrangements, and how to get further information. Updates are emailed and sent by text message with Somali, Arabic and Pashto translations provided.

The Mayor, Cabinet Members, housing officers and members of the Community Development team have met with residents, community leaders and city partners to provide updates, hear concerns and give feedback.

Our website is updated daily with new information as it becomes available and a dedicated helpline is available for residents to seek information, access support and flag issues that need addressing.

Meetings with residents will be put in place to share the outcomes of the ongoing survey work at Barton House and any decisions on the next steps once the investigations at the block are complete.

Question 2: Why did the media appear to know before the tenants or Barton House?

Answer:

Members of the press were briefed about the need to temporarily evacuate the block at 5pm on Tuesday, after the process of informing residents had begun.

No information was shared with the media before this briefing, and we do not know how local reporters became aware earlier in the afternoon.

Councillors were given confidential information at 4pm, and this information seems to have leaked to the press while our teams were on site.

Supplemental questions and answers:

Question 3.

How long did the council know about the evacuation? How did the manage to rustle up that many hotels rooms and 3 buses to get us there that quick?

Answer:

Senior officers and political leaders were briefed about the findings of a peer review on a previous building survey on Monday 13 November, and the decision to evacuate the building was taken on the morning of Tuesday 14 November. The process of evacuating the building began approximately four hours after that decision was taken.

We are fortunate to hold positive working relationships with many hotel and transport providers in the city and are grateful for their commitment yet again to supporting our city during an emergency situation.

We have experience of securing large amounts of hotel accommodation at short notice, drawn mainly from needing to take a similar approach during the national 'Everyone In' intervention during the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw hotel rooms needing to be provided at short notice to 1,200 homeless or at risk of homeless individuals. This experience and positive relationships enabled officers to quickly secure the rooms needed

Question 4.

Why is nobody able to give us any straight answers to straight questions?

Answer:

We're doing our best to respond to residents' concerns and questions. This is a complex and moving situation.

Question 5.

Is the University of Bristol buying the land?

Answer:

We will not be selling the building or land to the university or anyone else.

Question 6.

Should we need to move out, how quickly can you move us into permanent housing, as this is just as urgent.

Answer:

We are awaiting the report on the structure investigations which will inform any decision about next steps.

We cannot make guarantees about permanent housing at this time, but it is likely that if it were needed, residents would have the highest Band 1 Priority as other people with a critical housing need on the housing waiting list.

Options for providing alternative accommodation are currently being reviewed. These plans include using our own council housing and that of partner housing providers should we need to decommission the block. This planning will run in parallel to work to prepare for other eventualities that may emerge from the analysis of the results of the ongoing survey work.

Question: PQ22.06

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Question submitted by: Dan Ackroyd

Question 1: I realise that it is too soon to investigate the response of the Council once the nature of the emergency situation became public, but people of Bristol, particularly those who live in Barton House, deserve to know the details of the concerns regarding the safety of buildings, that led to large amounts of money being spent in an emergency.

There are multiple FOI requests outstanding that seek basic information that should have been provided weeks ago, including these two:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/information_regarding_the_inspec
https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/large_panel_system_ips_buildings

But there are probably other FOI requests made on similar topics.

It would save the FOI team a lot of work if the Council was proactively releasing information about what has happened.

Please will you commit to providing responses to those FOI requests before the "Budget scrutiny" meeting on Friday?

If nothing else, the Councillors setting the budget need to know detailed information about the problems at Barton House. The unexpected cost looks very likely to be a larger amount of money than the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

This answer was provided during the meeting, the recording is available at:

[Cabinet - Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 4.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)

Question: PQ22.07 & PQ22.08

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Question submitted by: Ann Fisher

Question 1: Can you explain why you want use to pay rent when we can't live there?

Answer:

- Stopping rent charging would end our contractual relationship with tenants. This is an important relationship that ensures many protections for residents, and places duties on the council that would not exist in the absence of this relationship. While tenants are paying rent we have a responsibility to them and it means we are currently funding alternative accommodation and food, as well as daily payments to people staying with family and friends.
- Also, the ending of rent charging would result in the recalculation of benefits received by the majority of residents of the block. Such recalculations may negatively impact people's incomes and potentially create a debt that would need to be paid out of future benefit entitlement.
- During this temporary evacuation we believe our approach is in the best interests of the majority of residents, but we will keep our policy under review once we know the long term position.

Question 2: Why I had to be evacuated and why everyone know before anyone in Barton House was told?

Answer:

- The risk to the building is that an individual fire in one flat could cause a collapse. This is why we increased waking watch and why they remain in the building.
- Members of the press were briefed about the need to temporarily evacuate the block at 5pm on Tuesday, after the process of informing residents had begun.
- Housing officers and members of our Community Development team began door knocking within hours of the decision being taken to temporarily evacuate the building. Letters were posted to each door, calls were made to those we had contact details for and advice was given for anyone we could not reach or were not at home that evening, to contact our free helpline so advice could be given on how to access temporary accommodation and why we were taking the action we did. The vast

majority of households were accounted for on the evening of Tuesday 14 November with all households being in contact with officers within days of that initial effort.

- The block has never been at risk of immediate collapse. We have been clear that the possible risks relate to how the block would fare in the event of a fire, explosion or a heavy impact event.
- The temporary evacuation is a precautionary measure to ensure residents are kept as safe as possible whilst we further investigate the structure and ascertain how safe the block is. Because the heightened concern relates specifically to the risk of a fire, explosion or high impact would pose to the structure, there is greater risk at night and/or when lots of people are in residence, as this means it takes much longer to evacuate than for a small number of people in the daytime. This is why short visits are permitted and why staff continue to work in the block.
- When we have the results of the full structural survey, we will make a decision on the basis of that information.
- This was an emergency evacuation which took place on the same day that the decision was made, so unfortunately that urgency meant a meeting or other forewarning was not possible. We did however write to residents, hand-delivering letters on the day.
- Since that time, we have provided regular written updates to explain the reasons for the evacuation, the support put in place, accommodation arrangements, and how to get further information. Updates are emailed and sent by text message with Somali, Arabic and Pashto translations provided.
- The Mayor, Cabinet Members, housing officers and members of the Community Development team have met with residents, community leaders and city partners to provide updates, hear concerns and give feedback.
- Our website is updated daily with new information as it becomes available and a dedicated helpline is available for residents to seek information, access support and flag issues that need addressing.
- Meetings with residents will be put in place to share the outcomes of the ongoing survey work at Barton House and any decisions on the next steps once the investigations at the block are complete.

Question: CQ22.01

Cabinet – 5 DECEMBER 2023

Question submitted by: Councillor Amal Ali

Question 1: It is, of course, an enormously difficult time for residents. I have unending sympathy for the people who have been asked to leave their home on such short notice. As a Lawrence Hill resident, I have been supporting them through this and will continue to do so.

However, I am glad that the executive took the difficult decision to evacuate the building, putting residents' safety first, when we learned of the dangers.

I am grateful to officers and my fellow councillors, including many Cabinet members, who helped through the day and into the night with the evacuation and since. I also want to put on record my thanks to all the volunteers at Café Conscious, the Bristol Cable for their fundraiser, and the council's community development teams - to name a few people and organisations who have helped support residents throughout the evacuation.

I have been speaking with residents since the evacuation. The main question they have is 'when will we know whether it is safe to move back?'

At the time of writing, we do not know the answer as the surveys are yet to be completed. However, there may be an update by the time of the Cabinet meeting.

This answer was provided during the meeting, the recording is available at:

[Cabinet - Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 4.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)